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ABSTRACT

This document describes research which examined the principles of reward and punishment applied to certain types of behavior portrayed by characters illustrated in 30 school readers. It was hypothesized that certain portrayed values, which have political connotations, are being transmitted to young people through the indirect method of socialization. Other research has shown that children will mimic behavior which they see being rewarded, and that they will not do things which they see being punished. The material analyzed consisted of the 1973 through 1977 school readers adopted for the state of Indiana for grades one through three. The stories contained seven exhibited forms of behavior: humanitarianism, dependence, dominance, obedience, selfishness, defiance, and individualism. Analysis of consequences of actions in the stories showed that punishments and rewards were consistently given in response to the seven forms of behavior. Thus it was concluded that the readers are transmitting to young people, through the method of rewards and punishment, certain values and modes of behavior which are in most instances consistent with democratic principles. However, one must also consider the simultaneous effects of family, peer groups, and mass media on children's development. (Author/AV)

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POLITICAL VALUES IN THE INDIANA SCHOOL READERS

BY

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POLITICAL VALUES IN THE INDIANA SCHOOL READERS

The process by which the child acquires political attitudes, values and behavior appropriate to the role of a citizen has interested philosophers and political scientists for centuries, One can trace this concern back to Plato and Aristotle, who viewed the polis as an organism and the citizens as its members. In order for the members to serve their purpose within the organism, Plato and Aristotle felt that it was necessary to train the inhabitants to adopt a certain type of character which corresponded to the demands that the polis made upon them. It was and still is a known fact, that if the behavior of the members is not in harmony with ongoing values, conflict would arise in which the polis would encounter difficulty in functioning smoothly and perpetuating itself safely. Existence, after all, is one of the primary goals of all political bodies, just as it is of the human organism. (Sigel, 1970). Thus the purpose of political socialization is to instruct individuals to accept and internalize positive beliefs and practices so that they will develop into functional, not dysfunctional members within the political community.

There are numerous ways by which basic political values and modes of behavior are transmitted to children inhabiting a particular society. Social scientists have found that the primary agents of political socialization in Western democratic countries are the family, educational institutions, peer groups and the mass media. In order for the socialization process to be success-

ful, an effective method must be employed. Past studies (Bandura, Ross and Ross, 1963a and 1963b; and Rosenbaum and Bruning, 1966) have indicated that if a child witnesses another person receiving a reward for displaying a certain type of behavior, he will exhibit similar behavior when confronted with the same or a resembling situation, thinking he will likewise be rewarded. If the individual is punished for his actions, the observer will refrain from engaging in similar behavior, fearing he also will receive punishment. (Bandura, Ross and Ross, 1963a and 1963b; and Benton, 1966). Thus "the observer vicariously performs (the activities manifested) by the model, and the observer vicariously experiences the consequences of the behavior which are overtly experienced by the model." (Wheeler, 1966). This method is quite effective for instilling desired practices and for preventing deviant or disapproved actions in children. (Bandura, 1965).

It is the intention of the researcher to examine the principles of reward and punishment applied to certain types of behavior portrayed by characters illustrated in school readers. Readers were selected primarily because, they are introduced to children at an early age, used extensively throughout the educational institutions and contain social values. (Meyers, 1968). It is believed that some of these portrayed values have political connotations and are thus being transmitted to young people through the indirect method of socialization.

The material chosen for analysis consisted of the 1973 to 1977 school readers adopted for the State of Indiana, grades one

thru three. Pre-primers and primers were omitted. These grades were selected on the basis that readers used at these particular levels contain stories with a high percentage of social values. (Meyers, 1968). Thirty books were included in the sample. Titles are listed in the Bibliography section of this paper.

A story is often a rather complex unit to study, because incidents can occur in which leading characters display different types of behavior. Because of this, the researcher decided to analyze the themas contained within each story. A thema is a sequence of psychological events consisting of: (1) a circumstance or situation confronting an individual; (2) the behavior exhibited by the person; and (3) the consequence of the action as felt by the individual. (Child, Potter and Levine, 1946). Incidents confronting a character illustrated in the stories were such things as being requested by an adult to do something; seeing an individual in need of help; wanting to pursue a certain career, but being confronted by a friend who thinks another profession would be better. To determine the types of political behavior and values inherent in readers, a sample consisting of five books was analyzed. The first step was to examine the actions displayed by the Ego. Ego was defined as any character who participated in at least one third of the story. It did not matter if the Ego was a person or not. However, if he was a supernatural being or an animal, he had to act in a human-like way. The second step was to record the behavior manifested by leading characters which had

political implications, such as showing concern for another; asking a parent for advice; excluding someone from a game because that person is different from the other participants; following a camp leader's suggestion; refusing to help someone; disobeying an adult; and saying what one really feels, knowing others will disagree. The exhibited forms of behavior were grouped into seven categories: humanitarianism, dependence, dominance, obedience, selfishness, defiance and individualism. In order to standarize this investigation, conceptual and operational definitions were complied for each category. They are listed in Table I.

The consequences following the manifested modes of behavior were classified into rewards and punishments. Under appropriate conditions almost any activity or stimulus can function as an effective reinforcer. (Bandura, 1969). Therefore, one can say that a reward is a desirable, satisfying, needed, wanted or pleasing stimulus, that will increase the probability of a certain type of behavior-response to reoccur in a similar incident. Punishment on the other hand, is having a pleasant activity removed, or being subjected to a painful, unappealing or distasteful stimulus, which will decrease the likihood of an activity or event taking place in a resembling situation. In this particular inquiry rewards were: receiving material objects, (example: money, toys or extra dessert); escaping from an unsafe place; receiving praise, acclamation or notoriety; being given requested information, guidance or advice; feeling happy or proud of one's self. Punishments were: loosing material possessions, (example:

a book, money or a favorite sweater); physically injurying one's self; being lost; receiving a scolding or being reprimanded in some way; feeling unhappy, disappointed or shameful.

When the seven categories of behavior illustrated in the school readers are applied to political activities, one can see that some are consistent with the principles of democracy, whereas others are not. Citizens who show concern for their fellow man by supporting government programs which are intended to reduce poverty and inequality, or volunteer their services to organizations that help individuals who are experiencing social and economic problems, strengthen the political body. People who yearn for wealth, power, prestige and glory at the expense of others weaken the system. This is especially true in times of economic or political setbacks. Instead of concentrating on ways to overcome crisis and restore stability, self-centered individuals are concerned with what they can salvage or gain for themselves.

There are times when adults need to depend upon the judgement, knowledge and skill of elected and appointed officials. By giving certain individuals the authority to enact legislation and handle various social, economic and political matters, the inhabitants are able to receive many beneficial services which they probably could not do on their own. This does not mean that the members are helpless and must submit their independence to external forces, but rather they are aware of human limitations. It is when the inhabitants view the world as being hostile and unmanageable, and thus feel that they have to become subservient

to the personal desires and demands of those in authority positions that the existence of democracy is in danger.

It is crucial in a democratic system that each citizen see himeself not only as an integral part of the political body, but also as an individual who is able to: (1) make important decisions which will affect his life and perhaps the rest of society; (2) critically examine sources of information; (3) thoroughly evaluate projects introduced by government officials; and (4) resist peer group pressure, when he feels their actions are wrong.

Since some of these behavior patterns need to be adopted by the members of a democratic society at an early age so that they will develop into responsible, productive and actively involved citizens, it is hypothesized that characters portrayed in the readers who display behavior of humanitarianism, obedience, dependence and individualism will be rewarded for their actions. On the other hand, the political system would encounter difficulty in maintaining itself if the majority of the adults engaged in activities of selfishness, dominance and defiance. It is hypothesized that characters illustrated in the stories who manifest these modes of behavior will experience some type of punishment.

PROCEDURE

Each story within a given book was read independently by the researcher and two assistants to determine if one or more of the seven types of behavior was displayed by leading characters. If so, the major themas were identified and a file card prepared

for each one. The information recorded on the cards consisted of: (1) the title of the book and story; (2) the behavior exhibited by the characters; and (3) the consequence of the action. This method of analysis was applied to each of the thirty readers. The researcher would meet with the two assistants periodically to discuss and re-examine stories which were difficult to code.

RESULTS

After all the books were analyzed, the file cards were compared. Whenever two cards matched, the thema was included in the calculation of the results. If there was no agreement, then the thema was eliminated.

The Sign Test was afterwards used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the consequence of actions (reward or punishment) as applied to each of the seven categories of behavior. Application of the statistical test yielded the following results: (1) defiance Z value 5.06, $p < .01$; (2) dependence Z value 10.60, $p < .01$; (3) dominance Z value 9.38, $p < .01$; (4) humanitarianism Z value 14.42, $p < .01$; (5) individualism Z value 13.61, $p < .01$; (6) obedience Z value 6.0, $p < .01$; and (7) selfishness Z value 6.26, $p < .01$. Refer to Table II for a complete display of the data.

Since a significance level of less than .01 was obtained for each of the seven behavior patterns, all hypotheses were confirmed and accepted. Characters portrayed in the readers who engaged in activities of dependence, humanitarianism, individualism and obedience were rewarded in almost every major thema; whereas

defiance, dominance and selfishness were punished more often than rewarded.

It should be mentioned that even though this research project was carried out as systematically as possible, the analyzed material was of subjective nature and thus the personal preferences and biases of the coders may have had some effect on the outcome.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the results of this study, one can state that the readers used in grades one thru three by the Indiana public educational institutions are transmitting to young people, through the method of reward and punishment, certain values and modes of behavior which are in most instances consistant with democratic principles. It is impossible to conclude that these children will mature into responsible and productive members within their society, because readers are not the only political socializing agent. There are other important ones, such as the family, peer groups and the mass media, which also contribute to political development. These agents can communicate beliefs and behavior practices which are in agreement or in conflict with those contained in the school readers.

There is a need for further investigation into the transmission of political values in readers. Follow-up inquires and questionnaires could be given to children in order to ascertain which values they are retaining from the stories, for how long and what affect other socializing agents have on the

retention of these norms. As the results from this study clearly showed, values are introduced to children at an early age. Thus the more that we know about how these norms and values are acquired, the better we will be able to understand and explain later behavior.

TABLE I

Conceptual Definitions	Operational Definitions
Defiance - being resistant to one in a position of authority.	Defiance - refusing to comply with requests or suggestions given by teachers, guardians, policemen and other adults.
Dependence - relying on someone for help in times of need or distress.	Dependence - to seek or call upon camp counselors, firemen, parents and other adults for their assistance in working out problems, acquiring information, rescuing from danger, or learning to do a new task.
Dominance - treating other individuals as subordinates, and regarding one's self as a superior.	Dominance - making fun or laughing at a character in order to feel powerful and more important than one really is; stating that some type of punishment will be inflicted if others do not accept one's ideas, or refuse to adhere to one's demands; not allowing an individual to partake in a group activity because he or she is of lesser age, size, social status, strength, or of a different sex or race than the other members.
Humanitarianism - to respond to the needs and concerns of other people.	Humanitarianism - helping another in times of trouble or distress; sharing one's material possessions with classmates, friends and others.
Individualism - making decisions or choices by one's self.	Individualism - to attain some degree of freedom from parents by going on a hiking or camping trip alone; doing creative projects, such as painting pictures, making toys, building things; not to engage in an activity with peers if one prefers to do something else; accepting physical characteristics which distinguish one from others; giving suggestions, opinions and ideas even if others disagree.
Obedience - to do what an authority figure says.	Obedience - doing what parents, policemen and other adults advise or ask; following rules and regulations instituted by group leaders.

Selfishness - being only interested in personal attainments, and having little concern for others.

Selfishness - tricking someone or taking a possession away from him in order to satisfy one's desires and wants; refusing to help another in need; planning to harm others because one lost a game, race or some other type of competitive event.

Table II
Display of Data

Category of Behavior	Number of Times Rewarded	Number of Times Punished	Z Value	Significance Level
Defiance	2	18	5.06	$<.01$
Dependence	62	0	10.60	$<.01$
Dominance	0	21	9.38	$<.01$
Humanitarianism	107	1	14.42	$<.01$
Individualism	104	4	13.61	$<.01$
Obedience	18	0	6.0	$<.01$
Selfishness	7	36	6.26	$<.01$

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